



# KCVA Quarterly

**Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs**

**SPRING 2014**

**VOLUME 7, ISSUE 2**

## Commission Meetings:

**April 16 10:00 AM**  
Kansas Veterans'  
Home, 1220 WWII  
Memorial Dr. Winfield,  
KS.

**May 21 10:00 AM**  
Jayhawk Tower,  
700 SW Jackson,  
Topeka, KS

**June 18 10:00 AM**  
Jayhawk Tower,  
700 SW Jackson,  
Topeka, KS

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## 14th Annual Kansas Veterans' Home Egg Hunt

The Kansas Veterans' Home opened in May of 2000 and many events at the Winfield, Kansas, location have been around since that first year. One continuing tradition is the egg hunt. Community youth have been searching for treat-filled plastic eggs

for 14 years and are invited to join staff and residents for this years' hunt on April 18, 2014. Festivities should start at 4:00 pm in the Bleckley Hall entrance courtyard with sections for each age group. Join us for some springtime fun!



## Dennis Joynt Quilt Project at Kansas Veterans' Home

In March 2011, Dennis Joynt visited the Kansas Veterans' Cemetery in Winfield with the American Legion Riders. His small group detoured and paid a visit to the Kansas Veterans' Home while they were in the area. On the tour, he noted that almost none of the resident beds were sporting quilts and found his inspiration.

Over the last three years, Mr. Joynt has provided twin-sized quilts for 45 veterans living in Donlon Hall at KVH. His original pledge was to craft a quilt for each veteran at the Home personalized with the veteran's name and branch of service. He has taken one break to make a batch for wounded soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and then was back at his Threadbanger (a gift from his wife, Lynn, after he retired) for residents at KVH. His work with Quilts of Valor helps him focus his talent and energy to helping veterans.

Dennis Joynt is the son of two World War II veterans and served in the US Navy from 1968 through 1974, including service on the Mekong River. His dedication to veterans is a big part of his life and KVH is grateful that he donates his time and talent to giving comfort to residents here.

The latest residents to receive quilts were John Hunt and Jack Myers (seen below).



KVH resident John Hunt



Dennis Joynt with KVH resident Jack Myers.

## Generous Donation to KVH

The Kansas Veterans and Family Reunion presented the Kansas Veterans' Home with a generous donation of \$1,000 in March. The organization designates funds from its annual gathering and other fundraisers during the weekend event at El Dorado Lake.





### **Principles of Excellence Complaint System For VA Student Support: aka VA Complaint System of Record Notice (SORN)**

The online complaint system was initiated by Executive Order 13607, the Principles of Excellence (PoE), signed April 27, 2012. Through a joint effort among the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Defense, Education and Justice, along with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Federal Trade Commission, the online complaint system was deployed at the end of January 2014.

The centralized online reporting system is designed for Veterans, Service members, and eligible dependents to report negative experiences with educational institutions; and gives the federal government the information needed to identify and address unfair, deceptive, and misleading practices and ensure high quality academic and student support services are available. Troops and their families who run into problems getting access to education benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill and the DOD Military Tuition Assistance Program can submit complaints, and the agencies will work with the schools on the veteran's behalf to find resolutions.

As of September 13, 2013, 6,049 approved institutions have committed to the PoE. Students may also use VA form 22-0959 to submit a complaint. More information and online complaint submission can be found at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/feedback.asp>.

### **Using GI Bill Reimbursement for License and Certification**

You can use your GI Bill education benefit to receive reimbursement for license and certification exams up to a total reimbursement of \$2,000 for tests. There is no limit to the number of tests you can take and VA will reduce your remaining months of entitlement based on the cost of the test that is reimbursed. You may be reimbursed for retaking a test that you didn't pass. You can also retake tests you passed if the test is required for re-certification

or to retain a license you already have.

Tests that may be reimbursable by VA include licensing and/or certification for a job as a mechanic, medical technician, therapist, barber instructor, computer network engineer, website developer, and other professional. By certification, VA is referring to the certification you get by taking a specific test for a field of employment, and not a certificate you receive for completing training.

How reimbursement works:

- For the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the amount of entitlement reduced is proportionate to the cost of the test compared to a monthly entitlement charge rate. Your entitlement charged is rounded to the nearest non-zero whole month; this means even low-cost tests are charged one month of entitlement per test. As of 10/01/2013, full-time 100% entitlement is \$1,601.69.
- For all other GI Bill programs, the amount of entitlement reduced is proportionate for the cost of the test compared to your full-time monthly rate. As of 10/01/2013, full-time 100% entitlement is \$1,648.00.

You can also be reimbursed for national exams, such as GRE, SAT, MCAT, and TOEFL.

Not all tests are approved for reimbursement or are eligible for reimbursement. Always check with the VA or the State Approving Agency.

### **Upcoming Event**

The Department of Defense Hiring Heroes Program will host a job fair at the Fort Riley Conference Center on April 23, 2014. The Kansas State Approving Agency will be there to provide information to veterans and their families about the GI Bill and the KCVA. There will be over 60 employers providing job opportunities to veterans in Kansas and bordering states.

## New Faces of KCVA

### **Amber Bemiss**

Amber was born and raised in Bucklin, KS, and eventually settled in Dodge City, KS, where she is happily married with two boys. Amber majored in Business Administration and Corporate Law. She worked 13 years in the insurance industry, working her way from a Level III Marketing Assistant to Location Manager. She began her career at the Kansas Soldiers' Home in April of 2013 in Human Resources and recently accepted the opportunity to become the Business Office Manager. She is very excited to take part in the changes taking place at the Soldiers' Home and looks forward to being a team contributor.



### **Steve Ramirez**

Steve recently accepted the position of Human Resources Manager at Kansas Soldiers' Home. Steve is a native Kansan. He has an Associate of Arts degree from Haskell Indian Nations University and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Mid America Nazarene University. Steve has 27 years work experience for the State of Kansas, including 17 ½ years at the University of Kansas in the Equal Opportunity Office and Human Resources. Steve is married to southwest Kansas native Carla Ramirez. They have two children and one granddaughter. Steve is the proud son of two WWII veterans and grandson of a WWI veteran. Steve enjoys spending time with his family, sports (he has worked on the sidelines for KU football for the past 13 years) and riding his motorcycle.



### **Pam Rodriguez**

Pam is a retiree of the Army National Guard with 27 years of service, the majority as a full-time staff member of the National Guard. During part of her service, she was a helicopter pilot, and was the first female aviator in the Kansas National Guard, before moving to Arizona in 1988. Pam worked for the Arizona Department of Veterans Services as a Veterans Benefits Advocate. Her husband, Victor, is also a retiree of the National Guard. They moved to Kansas from Arizona in 2012 to be closer to Pam's family. Pam is the Chief Fiscal and Property Officer at the KCVA Central Office in Topeka.





## VA Removes Annual Income Reporting Requirement

WASHINGTON –The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is eliminating the annual requirement for most Veterans enrolled in VA's health care system to report income information beginning in March 2014. Instead, VA will automatically match income information obtained from the Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration.

“Eliminating the requirement for annual income reporting makes our health care benefits easier for Veterans to obtain,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “This change will reduce the burden on Veterans, improve customer service and make it much easier for Veterans to keep their health care eligibility up-to-date.”

Some Veterans applying for enrollment for the first time are still required to submit income information. There is no change in VA's long-standing policy to provide no-cost care to indigent Veterans, Veterans with catastrophic medical conditions, Veterans with a disability rating of 50 percent or higher, or for conditions that are officially rated as “service-connected.”

VA encourages Veterans to continue to use the health benefits renewal form to report changes in their personal information, such as address, phone numbers, dependents, next of kin, income and health insurance.

For more information, visit [www.va.gov/healthbenefits/cost](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/cost) or call VA toll-free at 1-877-222-VETS (8387).

## Greenhouse Opening at Kansas Soldiers' Home

On 03/13/14, residents of KSH hosted a grand opening for the greenhouse located on grounds. Many were in attendance, including Superintendent Scott Hilmes and residents from Halsey Hall, Lincoln Hall, and the cottages, who wanted to partake in the ribbon cutting. Prior to the opening, many cottage residents volunteered their time and effort to fix the greenhouse that sat in disrepair. Hailstorms and strong winds had caused damage to the roof and windows rendering the building useless until Dan Hartman took the initiative to help with repairs. Because of Dan and his efforts, the residents have the opportunity to grow various plants, vegetables, and flowers. A big thank you goes out to Dan Hartman for his efforts; Thank You Dan!



KSH Residents at the grand opening.



Superintendent Scott Hilmes, Business Office Mgr. Amber Bemiss holding the ribbon, and residents at the grand opening.

## Upcoming Events

### Central Office

Fort Riley Job Fair - The Department of Defense Hiring Heroes Program will host a job fair at the Fort Riley Conference Center on April 23, 2014. The Kansas State Approving Agency will be there to provide information to veterans and their families about the GI Bill and the KCVA. There will be over 60 employers providing job opportunities to veterans in Kansas and bordering states.

### Kansas Veterans' Home

#### April

- 3 - History of Quilts presented by the Cherokee Strip Museum
- 18 - Good Friday Brunch
- 18 - Easter Egg Hunt
- 19 - Trinity Baptist Easter Cantata
- 24 - Volunteer Recognition Ceremony
- 27 - Fishing Trip
- 29 - Winfield City Band
- 30 - Zoo Trip

#### May

- 6 - WSU Baseball Game
- 11 to 17 - National Nursing Home Week
- 16 - USO Puppet Show
- 17 - Drag Races at the Kansas International Dragway
- 26 - Memorial Day Ceremony at Winfield Veterans' Cemetery

#### June

- 18 - Magic Show

### Kansas Soldiers' Home

#### April

- 1 - Harlem Globetrotters
- 12 - Travis Tritt Concert
- 18 - KSH Easter Egg Hunt
- 22 - Earth Day Planting
- 25 - Movie Night
- 29 - Trip to Boot Hill Casino and Resort





## Memorial Day 2014

All four state veterans' cemeteries will be holding Memorial Day Celebrations this year at the following times:

Fort Dodge Veterans' Cemetery - 11:00 AM  
Fort Riley Veterans' Cemetery - 11:00 AM  
WaKeeney Veterans' Cemetery - 10:00 AM  
Winfield Veterans' Cemetery - 10:00 AM

Everyone is invited to join us in paying respect to our fallen veterans and soldiers.



## The Enhanced Mobile Delivery Program Mobile Office Will Be At The Following Locations



<b>Outreach and Site Visit</b>	<b>April 22</b>	<b>8 am - 5 pm</b>	<b>Walmart</b>	<b>Manhattan</b>
<b>Outreach and Site Visit</b>	<b>April 22</b>	<b>9 am - 5 pm</b>	<b>Walmart</b>	<b>Garden City</b>
<b>Outreach and Site Visit</b>	<b>April 23</b>	<b>9 am - 5 pm</b>	<b>Walmart</b>	<b>Great Bend</b>
<b>Hiring Our Heroes Event</b>	<b>April 23</b>	<b>9 am - 2 pm</b>	<b>Fort Riley</b>	<b>Fort Riley</b>
<b>SWKAAA Senior Expo</b>	<b>April 24</b>	<b>9 am - 4 pm</b>	<b>Expo Center</b>	<b>Dodge City</b>
<b>Gray Area Retiree Presentation</b>	<b>April 26</b>	<b>8 am - 12 pm</b>	<b>Military Training Center</b>	<b>Salina</b>
<b>Outreach and Site Visit</b>	<b>April 29</b>	<b>8 am - 5 pm</b>	<b>Walmart</b>	<b>Hays</b>
<b>Outreach and Site Visit</b>	<b>April 29</b>	<b>9 am - 5 pm</b>	<b>Walmart</b>	<b>Pittsburg</b>
<b>Life Enrichment Event</b>	<b>May 14</b>	<b>8 am - 4 pm</b>	<b>Topeka VA Hospital</b>	<b>Topeka</b>
<b>Kansas Freedom Ride</b>	<b>May 17</b>	<b>10 am - 2 pm</b>	<b>DC Harley Davidson</b>	<b>Dodge City</b>
<b>Alefs Veterans Appreciation Day</b>	<b>June 14</b>	<b>10 am - 4 pm</b>	<b>Alefs Harley Davidson</b>	<b>Wichita</b>
<b>Heartland Military Day</b>	<b>June 14</b>	<b>8 am - 4 pm</b>	<b>National Guard Museum</b>	<b>Topeka</b>
<b>Lenora Jubilee</b>	<b>June 21-22</b>	<b>10 am - 9 pm</b>	<b>Event Grounds</b>	<b>Lenora</b>



## KCVA Directory

### Service Representatives Western Region

Colby	785-462-3572
Ft. Dodge	620-225-4041
Garden City	620-276-3102
Hays	785-625-8532
Junction City	785-238-4522
Marysville	785-562-2581
Salina	785-823-2862

### Southeast Region

Emporia	620-342-3347
Hutchinson	620-662-7131
Independence	620-331-0540
Lawrence	785-843-5233
Overland Park	913-371-5968
Winfield	620-221-9021
Wichita VAMC	316-688-6869

### Mobile Office Units

Hays	785-220-8900
Independence	785-220-5183

### State Veterans' Homes

Kansas Soldiers' Home Fort Dodge	620-227-2121
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Kansas Veterans' Home Winfield	620-221-9479
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### State Veterans' Cemeteries

Ft. Dodge	620-338-8772
Ft. Riley	785-717-3050
WaKeeney	785-743-5685
Winfield	620-229-2287

### Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs

700 SW Jackson, Suite 1004

Topeka, KS 66603

785-296-3976

Fax: 785-296-1462

<http://kcva.ks.gov/>

### Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs

700 SW Jackson, Suite 1004  
Topeka, KS 66603

Tel: 785 296 3976  
Fax: 785 296 1462

We're on the Web!  
[Kcva.ks.gov](http://Kcva.ks.gov)



KCVA Mobile Units at the State Fair 2013

*"Serving those who honored Kansas  
with their service and sacrifices, as they  
have served us"*